

## IRS Oversight Board

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For immediate release  
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### **IRS OVERSIGHT BOARD FOCUSES ON CUSTOMER SERVICE**

Customer service issues were front and center for the IRS Oversight Board when it met in Atlanta, Georgia July 26 -27<sup>th</sup>. Oversight Board members toured the IRS Wage and Investment Division Atlanta campus in Chamblee, GA, and were briefed on some new technologies that help the IRS provide better service to taxpayers. The IRS reported its latest service levels and progress towards its FY2005 goals. In addition, the Board participated in a tax forum and heard tax practitioners' and IRS employees' views on the IRS' performance. The IRS and Board also discussed plans to perform more research on taxpayers' needs.

#### **Technology Highlighted at Tour of Wage & Investment Division**

While in Atlanta for the Board meeting, several Board members toured the IRS Atlanta campus. Board members were briefed and watched demonstrations on the processes and technology that help the division process correspondence and assist taxpayers.

Among the technologies highlighted was the Correspondence Imaging System, which scans correspondence received from taxpayers. The scanned images are easily accessed and viewed on screen by IRS employees and electronically filed for future reference or analysis. The system is easy to use and eliminates filing, storing, and transferring paper documents. It integrates with other IRS systems and allows the IRS to provide better information to taxpayers. Another technology demonstrated, Contact Recording, helps improve phone service accuracy and efficiency.

Improving phone service is the focus of the Joint Operations Center, which helps control phone traffic received through the IRS' toll-free numbers. The center is able to route calls to reduce taxpayer wait time, and route incoming telephone traffic to assistants who are best qualified to answer the questions for which taxpayers are seeking assistance.

"It's very exciting to see the tangible results of some of the investments made in the IRS infrastructure for the past five years," said Board Chairman Raymond T. Wagner. "The IRS has made extraordinary strides, and is to be commended."

#### **IRS Shows Stabilized Telephone Service Levels and Growth in Electronic Services**

In a report to the IRS Oversight Board, the IRS observed that in the last three years, improvement in telephone service and accuracy rates have stabilized at high levels, and the popularity of e-filing, e-services, and the IRS web site continues to grow. In addition, productivity and efficiency gains in processing returns and adjusting accounts are remaining steady.

"The IRS has shown important customer service improvements in the past five years," said Board Chairman Raymond T. Wagner. "A few years ago, only two out of three calls to the main IRS toll-free telephone line could get through. Now, for the third year in a row, more than eight out of ten calls can get through. The Board has consistently stated that the IRS must stabilize its customer service improvements while boosting its enforcement activities. The IRS is on the right track."

#### **Board Hears Results of 2005 Employee Survey**

The IRS presented its analysis of the 2005 employee survey conducted by the Gallup Organization. The IRS reported that overall employee job satisfaction continues to rise and has been on a positive growth trend since 2001.

### **Board Listens to Concerns of Tax Practitioners and IRS Employees**

The Board continued its “listening session” at the IRS’ Nationwide Tax Forum in Atlanta. The Board is participating in all six forums that are being held at different cities this summer. The forums attract thousands of tax practitioners, particularly smaller firms eager to learn about new IRS products, services, and policy. The Board’s listening sessions afford these practitioners and IRS employees the opportunity to communicate their views about what is working and what is not working at the IRS and to make suggestions for improvements. The Board will continue its listening sessions at the remaining three forums, and will release its overall findings in future reports.

### **IRS Moving Forward on Long-Term Goal Initiative**

While there are clear improvements in IRS performance, the Board has recommended that the IRS develop quantitative measures in alignment with the IRS’ five-year Strategic Plan, released earlier this year (to read the plan, go to [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov)). It is the Board’s view that such measures will help the IRS monitor progress toward goals and help the IRS make management adjustments where required.

At the July 27<sup>th</sup> meeting, the IRS discussed its broad, enterprise-wide long-term goal initiative to measure specific performance related to the strategic goals outlined in the IRS plan—improve taxpayer service, enhance enforcement of the tax law, and modernize IRS through its people, processes, and technology.

While the initiative is in the developmental stage, the Board noted that it is impressed with the approach. The IRS said that it plans to release its final recommendation for the measures at the end of this year.

Meanwhile, the Board is planning a national survey to better understand how well the information and services the IRS provides align with taxpayers’ needs. The Board intends to hire a market research firm to conduct the survey later this year. Results will be reviewed and announced in 2006.

The Board’s next meeting will be held in Washington, DC on September 22-23, 2005.

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